



The Education Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire:

This questionnaire for Mayoral Candidates is to be submitted and collected by United Way and made public.

Questionnaire

**1. What is your vision for education in Los Angeles?**

My vision for education in Los Angeles is that of a public school district that has the highest graduation rate of any big city in the nation, where parents and students alike have choices in the schools kids will attend and the direction the child's curriculum will take (that will include college preparation, vocational training, and the arts).

While the Mayor does not have direct control over the LAUSD, some of the reform items I support include school choice and the parent-trigger legislation (as I believe anything that provides an incentive for parents to become more involved in their schools is good for public education).

I would also invite all stakeholders, particularly parents, to have a voice in the reform measures to improve the LAUSD by holding town hall meetings throughout the city in order to inspire, inform, motivate and empower parents and community members to become a more integral part of the education process to bring about needed reforms.

Given the size and complexity of the LAUSD, I will create within the Mayor's office an Education Information Officer that will serve as a sounding board for parents, students, teachers and administrators. This office will be part of the Mayor's office and completely independent of the LAUSD. In the face of recent LAUSD scandals, including the Miramonte scandal, allegations of the misuse of funds, and fading confidence in our school district, Angelenos need to know that there is a safe place to go outside of the LAUSD to bring their issues and concerns.

As Mayor, I will also create an education liaison that will attend all LAUSD board meetings and will also serve as an education advisor in the Mayor's office. The Mayor's education office will create and operate a user-friendly resource website that will be a one-stop-shop for providing easy access to policies, municipal codes, and state and federal laws that directly relate to school facilities, rules, guidelines, and funds. This resource will also provide information about, and links to, organizations that cover education-related matters such as bullying, gangs, special education needs, drug use, school violence, school safety, and construction and land-use issues.

I will utilize the influence of the Mayor's office, including the power of the podium, to fight cuts to Adult Education Programs, which are critical in providing the training and skills necessary for many of our students to find jobs in today's workforce and to

become productive members of society. Additionally, our public schools should reinstate vocational training at the middle school and high school levels. Partnerships with private business and industries will contribute to the cost of these reforms, and provide internships and job placement opportunities.

**2. What lessons have you learned from Mayor Villaraigosa's work in education? What has worked and what would you do differently?**

While I disagree with Mayor Villaraigosa's attempt to take over control of the LAUSD, I appreciate Mayor Villaraigosa's willingness to focus much-needed attention on education reform. I also agree with Mayor Villaraigosa's support of the parent trigger legislation.

Many parents that have kids in the Mayor's PLAS schools are dissatisfied and unhappy with the program. The parents should be given the opportunity to choose the future of these schools — whether through Charters or returning the schools to the LAUSD.

Finally, in order to accelerate education reform, I will consider supporting candidates (potentially through endorsements and/or fundraising efforts) that want to reform the District and help change the way our public school system works. However, I have no intention of controlling the Board like some critics have argued Mayor Villaraigosa has attempted to do, but instead will partner with it.

**3. As you know, low student performance significantly impacts a city's well-being. What are the 3 most important things you would do as mayor to improve our schools?**

First, I will work with the LAUSD to create a trade-tech diploma.

I believe the LAUSD should should reinstate career and technical training and trade classes, including wood-shop, machine-shop, graphic design, drafting, and construction-related classes. I believe the LAUSD should also create a trade-tech diploma so students that choose a path other than college have an additional reason to stay in school, to work hard, and to graduate with a diploma that will help them get a job in a field that interests them and in which they have been trained.

Students that decide to seek a trade-tech diploma would have the choice to elect the trade-tech route after the 10th grade.

There are many ways that the LAUSD can cover the costs of the trade-tech curriculum. It is very likely that the trade-tech curriculum would be cost/revenue neutral because many students that seek the trade-tech route will be spending more time on campus and in class which will increase the amount of "ADA" (Average Daily Attendance) funds received by their school.

Furthermore, additional revenue covering the cost of the trade-tech curriculum would be created through internship opportunities with the private business sector. Students could participate in work-study programs where a company pays into a program that

enables students to spend time working for the company to gain on-the-job experience. Obviously, students that do a good job as an intern through such a work-study program would have a leg-up in getting a full-time job after graduation with the company the student interned for.

Second, I will create the Education Information Office within the Mayor's office (as described in the answer to question no. 1 above) that will serve as an independent sounding board for parents, students, teachers and administrators.

Third, I will use the power of the Mayoral podium and political capital to ensure that every dollar of available funding for education is timely provided to the District. The District must, however, be held accountable for its spending so the abuses of the past are not repeated. The recent news reports of the theft by districts of cafeteria funds meant for meals for poor students taken to pay other district expenses warrants an outside audit of the LAUSD. If it takes public battles along the way, or having to alert parents/voters to bureaucratic roadblocks in the funding and/or accountability process, I am independent enough to succeed in those challenges.

**4. As mayor, would you support John Deasy remaining Superintendent? Would you use your position to champion Deasy's push for reform - and if so, how?**

I currently support John Deasy remaining as Superintendent. I would use my position to champion a number of reform measures as described throughout this questionnaire.

**5. As mayor, would you support charter school expansion in Los Angeles? Do you see a need to limit charter school expansion or charter school funding?**

I believe that the more choices parents and students have in education, the better the chances are that our public education system will be successful. Therefore, I support charter school expansion in Los Angeles - provided there is accountability for all charter schools. I will also work with the LAUSD to help them improve their schools to increase the likelihood parents will chose LAUSD non-charter schools.

**6. Some would consider UTLA resistant to many of the recent reform policies that have been implemented to improve school performance. What is your opinion on this?**

I agree with those that consider the UTLA resistant to many of the recent reform policies that have been implemented to improve school performance. It is unfortunate that the UTLA has fought charter schools, the parent trigger legislation, and fairness in the teacher evaluation process. I also disagree with the opposition of the union to SB 1530, a proposed law that would have made it easier for school districts to fire teachers in cases of sexual and other egregious misconduct.

**7. It is essential to include student achievement data when evaluating our teachers.**

**-I agree**

**-I disagree  
(Explain your answer.)**

I agree that student achievement data should be included when evaluating our teachers. I also believe that parents should be involved in the evaluation process.

Unfortunately, the solution to the teacher evaluation system is not as simple as either protecting teacher seniority or laying off teachers based on who is the lowest-performing. Teachers do not get to pick their students. What we need is a full and comprehensive evaluation system that takes into account certain contributing factors, including class size, language barriers, socio-economic factors, and special needs circumstances of students. Such an evaluation system should also include peer evaluations. We must compare apples to apples in the implementation of the teacher evaluation process. Some students start out at a lower performance level than others and teachers should not be penalized simply because they were assigned a steeper hill to climb based on the student-related factors described above.

**8. If you had a child entering middle school, to which school would you send your child? Explain your answer.**

If I had a child entering middle school, I would send my child to Magnolia Science Academy in the Hollywood area. According to LAUSD.net my home middle school is Hubert Howe Bancroft Middle School in Hollywood. However, Magnolia is a co-location charter on the Bancroft campus. Magnolia has a [schools.org](https://schools.org) score of 7 out of 10 which is significantly higher than Bancroft's score of 4 out of 10. Magnolia also has an API score almost 100 points higher than Bancroft. Also, after learning more about the philosophy of Magnolia, I would choose the Magnolia charter.